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CHAFEE BROWNFIELDS BILL BECOMES LAW

President Bush Hails Chafee's Bill as "The Best of Washington"

PROVIDENCE, RI -- President George W. Bush today signed the Brownfields Revitalization and Environmental Restoration Act of 2001 (H.R. 2869) into law. The measure-- authored by U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) -- is designed to encourage the cleanup of lightly polluted properties known as brownfields.

The original Senate bill was introduced by Senator Chafee -- along with Senators Bob Smith (R-NH), Harry Reid (D-NV), and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) -- on February 15, 2001. Chafee's legislation authorizes \$250 million per year, over fiscal years 2002-2006, for the assessment and cleanup of brownfields sites. The measure also provides legal protections for innocent parties involved in redeveloping brownfields sites.

"Brownfields legislation is a top environmental priority for Democrats, Republican and the Bush Administration alike," said Chafee following final Senate approval of his bill on December 20, 2001. "This is the most important environmental legislation passed by Congress last year," Chafee said.

During a bill signing ceremony at the Millennium Corporate Center in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, which was built on a former brownfield site, Bush singled out Chafee for his efforts to reform the nation's brownfields program. Hailing the legislation as "the best of Washington," Bush called it good public policy and an example of what can happen "when people decide to cooperate, not bicker, when people put national interests ahead of political interests."

The brownfields bill will provide \$200 million per year, for fiscal years 2002-2006 for grants to local and state governments to assess and cleanup contaminated brownfield sites. The legislation also authorizes \$50 million per year over the same period for grants to local and state governments to establish and enhance brownfields cleanup programs.

The bill also resolves some of the liability issues surrounding brownfields. Specifically, the bill provides legal protections for innocent parties, such as contiguous property owners, prospective buyers and innocent landowners. Removing these liability concerns will spur redevelopment of brownfields by individuals and companies that would otherwise fear entanglement in cleanup liability.

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